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APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

IPF:(1992-96) $11 390 000
(DOM/92/G31) - Conservation and Management of Biodiversity
in the Coastal Zone of the Dominican Republic

Date of approval by the AC:[1/]	24 November 1993
Expected duration:	Three years
Proposed executing agency:	Government (Sub-secretariat for Natural Resources)
Implementing agency:	CEBSE, Groups Jaragua, other NGOs
Proposed UNDP contribution:	$2 956 000 Source of funds: GEF
Total UNDP budget:	$2 956 000

Project background

The greatest portion of the Dominican Republic's biota has never been assessed with respect to its economic value or conservation status and the diversity of many important plant and animal groups and species is known in only a preliminary way. However, ecological surveys and preliminary inventories indicate that the country has levels of endemism among the highest in the West Indies, a region recognized globally for its high species endemism. As well, the International Council for Bird Preservation lists the Dominican Republic as an area of high biodiversity based on its overall species richness and lists it as a "critical" area, its highest priority classification for biodiversity conservation.

The country's coastal zone possesses critical winter habitat for hundreds of migratory species and harbours threatened species that are listed under every major international convention and treaty for species protection (CITES, RAMSAR, SPAW, etc.). These include whales, sea turtles, crocodiles, manatees, black coral, and numerous species of birds, reptiles, invertebrates, and vascular plants. Some of the most important surviving populations of globally threatened species, including whales and crocodiles, occur within the Dominican Republic Exclusive Economic Zone. In the Dominican Republic, coastal ecosystem function and biodiversity determine the status of key economic activities. Productivity of marine fisheries is largely dependent on the vulnerable habitats on the littoral margins of the island platform of Hispaniola. Most of the commercial species of fish and shellfish harvested by the local fishermen are dependent on near-shore habitats such as mangroves, sea grass beds, and coral reefs at important stages in their life cycles. Land use practices in upland watersheds, including forestry, agriculture, pollution and drainage of coastal wetlands, have a deleterious effect on fisheries populations that is greater than that of direct harvest. In recent years, tourism, which has focused almost entirely on the coastal zone, has become the country's most important economic activity, further emphasizing the need for sound coastal zone management. While the system of protected areas is quite comprehensive in geographical and ecological inclusiveness, it has

[1/] This Fact Sheet reflects the status of the project/revision at the time it was approved by the Action Committee; modifications to the project/revision may have occurred subsequently.

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inclusiveness, it has not yet been possible to develop or implement management plans for all designated natural areas or places where wild populations are harvested (i.e., fisheries). The development and implementation of practical management plans is urgently needed to assure survival of unique biodiversity components so that they can make increasingly productive and sustainable contributions to society. The lack of information regarding biodiversity and ecosystem function is a major factor retarding both preservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its products. There is no biodiversity information system in place that is suitable for management and development decision-making. At the same time, there is insufficient attention to viable economic alternatives to unsustainable resource use which build on local knowledge. Given its high levels of endemism, the Dominican Republic should be a prime target for screening for economically useful compounds derived from biodiversity resources. Pharmaceutical screening of terrestrial plants has been initiated to a limited degree, but most other organisms remain largely unassessed. There is not yet a comprehensive program for management of data relevant to locating biodiversity resources; nor a mechanism in place for economic screening, marketing biodiversity products, and returning profits to the coastal zone to offset costs associated with conservation of waters and wildlands.

Description of project

The immediate objectives of the project are to: (a) strengthen the biodiversity management capacity of government, NGOs and local communities by improving regional and local coastal zone planning and management with economic development components; (b establish a research program in-country to support coastal zone management, sustainable resource development, biodiversity conservation and continuous long-term environmental monitoring; (c) formulate and propose a coastal zone management policy for the Dominican Republic, based on the experience gained and information gathered in the two pilot programmes; (d) in collaboration with community organizations, establish appropriate mechanisms of building on local understanding of biodiversity to strengthen its management as a basis for long-term sustained economic activity; and (e) develop and implement effective mechanisms for the participation of local communities and other stakeholders in conflict resolution and decision-making for conservation planning and action.

Project activities will include: (a) increasing the information on coastal species and habits; (b) testing a fishing biodiversity database and information system; (c) developing two regional stakeholder management plans, a draft coastal zone management policy and broad-based local biodiversity education programmes; (d) putting in place collaborative processes for shared resource management and conflict prevention and resolution; (e) establishing participatory socioeconomic action plans for the selected pilot areas; and (f) conducting peasant-to-peasant training in sustainable agro-ecology, agroforestry and conservation-based coastal resource harvesting.

Inputs

UNDP will provide international consultants in strategic environmental planning (36 man-months), and terrestrial and marine protected area planning (16 man-months), national and technical project coordinators (72 man-months); local consultants in protected areas management and planning (36 man-months); subcontracts including demonstration projects, biodiversity inventories, database of community participation, peasant-to-peasant agriculture; fellowships and in-service training and scientific, logistical and office equipment.

Financial data

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Personnel	927 400
Subcontract	1 522 400
Training	40 000
Equipment	236 800
Miscellaneous	229 500
Total	2 956 100

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